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P&PD 1The Philippines: The Mechanics
of Marcos's Victory [REDACTED]

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Summary

Vote buying, intimidation, and pork-barrel politics have always been a part of Philippine elections. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the presence of the independent poll monitoring group and foreign observers at the Marcos-Aquino election limited these traditional forms of fraud. Nevertheless, the new tactic of systematic voter disenfranchisement--affecting 4 million voters nationwide--by itself probably secured President Marcos's victory. [REDACTED]

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Enthusiasm Widespread

President Marcos attempted throughout the 57-day campaign to demonstrate the credibility of the election process to foreign and domestic critics. He welcomed foreign delegations--including US participants--to observe the voting and accredited the National Citizen's Movement For Free Elections, an independent poll monitoring group staffed by private citizens. NAMFREL's presence during the 1984 National Assembly elections was judged by many observers the most important factor in making those elections the "cleanest" in recent memory. In addition, though Aquino's time on television was limited by the government-controlled media, Marcos did not move to censor or shut down several popular opposition newspapers or radio stations that carried extensive coverage of the Aquino campaign. [REDACTED]

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According to the US Embassy, Filipinos were enthusiastic about the prospect of choosing a president--the last tightly fought presidential election had been held in 1969. Both candidates had solid blocks of support. Residents of urban areas--particularly the middle class and businessmen--supported Aquino; her campaign rallies in cities throughout the country were characterized by large and enthusiastic crowds. Marcos,

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meanwhile, retained much support in rural areas--where 60 percent of the population lives. [REDACTED]

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All available reporting suggested throughout the campaign that the race--a referendum on Marcos--would be no landslide

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Analysis of the demographic characteristics of the undecided voters indicates most leaned toward Aquino. Accounting for statistical error, this suggested that Aquino probably could have defeated Marcos in a fair contest by a margin of 58 to 42 percent--nearly a 3.5-million-vote difference--but at minimum she probably would have won unbiased balloting with a cushion of 2 million votes. [REDACTED]

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The polls also indicated that Aquino had picked up many undecided voters in the last week of the campaign [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] In the 1984 National Assembly election, 90 percent of eligible voters actually cast ballots. [REDACTED]

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The Dimensions of Traditional Modes of Cheating

Aquino's margin was narrowed by traditional forms of electoral fraud, which much of the voting public expected from both sides [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] According to the US Embassy, Marcos approved a vote-buying scheme in early January [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Meanwhile, one preelection poll suggested that over 44 percent of the voters believed the election outcome would in some way be affected by vote buying and other forms of chicanery. [REDACTED]

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The pattern of ballot box stuffing, the switching of false election returns for authentic ones, and "flying voters" who cast ballots in multiple precincts evidently followed historical patterns. [REDACTED]

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[redacted]

The direct manipulation of voter returns is reflected in slow reporting of returns from Marcos strongholds in the rural north. [redacted]

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[redacted] According to the US Embassy, the 35 employees of the Election Commission who walked off their jobs last weekend did so because the Commission was manipulating the vote tallies from these regions. [redacted]

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The opposition was not without fault in the election. In one city south of Manila, for example, Aquino supporters had prepared Aquino ballots for voters. Irregularities on the part of Aquino supporters, however, were limited because of weak organization and meager financing; US Embassy reporting suggests that the opposition spent about \$10 million compared with \$300 million by the ruling party. Accordingly, we believe the relative impact of cheating by the Aquino supporters was modest compared to that of the ruling party. [redacted]

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Evidence of Disenfranchisement

[redacted] the presence of the independent poll monitoring group and foreign observers complicated the task of ensuring a Marcos victory with traditional forms of fraud. In the 1984 elections--when NAMFREL played a particularly prominent role in the cities--the opposition won 59 seats in the Assembly--nearly 40 more than Marcos had predicted. Moreover, the opposition won 15 of 21 seats in Manila. [redacted]

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[redacted] the ruling party decided to disenfranchise as many probable Aquino supporters as possible to overcome the obstacle posed by NAMFREL. Disenfranchisement primarily took the form of altering voter registration lists on the eve of the election, according to US Embassy observers. Analysis of official election returns confirms that this occurred primarily in urban areas where the ruling party was concerned that Aquino would do well. [redacted]

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The most blatant disenfranchisement took place in Manila, which both the ruling party and the opposition considered critical to winning the election. In Makati--the third-largest voting district in Manila--the switching of voter registration lists disenfranchised one-third to one-half of the middle class voters, according to Embassy reporting. [redacted]

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[] assessment conducted a week before the election projected a million vote victory for Aquino in the capital--a margin difficult to offset with returns from elsewhere. The turnout in Manila, however, was 900,000 votes less than expected--based both on 1986 registration and turnouts projected by the ruling party--and Aquino only defeated Marcos in the capital by 200,000 votes. []

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Disenfranchisement in areas outside Manila kept about 3 million voters from casting their ballots, judging from Election Commission estimates of the turnout. Twenty-one million voters were expected to vote outside the capital, []

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[] but it appears only 18 million votes will be counted. If 60 percent of these disenfranchised voters outside Manila supported Aquino--a conservative estimate if ruling party preelection assessments were accurate--she would have defeated Marcos by 600,000 votes. []

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SUBJECT: The Philippines: The Mechanics of Marcos's Victory

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